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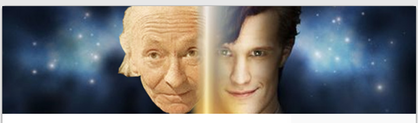

Archive for the 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman' Category

Tom Baker (1990's)

October 26, 2009

Here's a brief extract of a Tom Baker interview, in which he talks about his approach to playing the Doctor, as well as the plans for the 1970's film 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman', for which he co-wrote the script with Ian Marter, but which was never made.

"I never consciously thought it out. I never knew where I was going with 'Doctor Who', because the very essence of the character is that the Doctor never does know where he's going. What I worked hard at was maintaining the spontaneity and ideas, keeping the audience surprised, since, after all, the Doctor was meant to be an alien. He wasn't emotionally involved, except in the most heroic way.

"The script for 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman' was about scarecrows becoming animated when a fertilizer on Earth goes horribly wrong. The scarecrows were able to make other scarecrows and they go on the rampage, raiding stores and using their sticks as weapons. The Cybermen came into it, too; there were wonderful scenes of the Cybermen coming out of the sea.

"The whole thing hinged on the fact that somewhere out in space was this creature called Scratchman, which is an old-world named for the Devil. He just wanted to make trouble. I remember the ending: we were going to turn the whole studio into a giant pinball table. The Doctor and his companions were stuck on this table and Scratchman was firing these balls at us. The balls disappeared down holes which were sort of gateways into other hells. It was a very violent film, but very funny too. The production office saw it and hated it, but I thought it was marvellous."

Tags: Doctor Who Meets Scratchman, Tom Baker
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Elisabeth Sladen (1990)

October 17, 2009

With the third series of 'The Sarah Jane Adventures' having just started on the BBC, here's Elisabeth Sladen back in 1990 talking about how she upset Jon Pertwee by getting her hair cut, how she helped Tom Baker and Ian Marter with the script for the aborted 70's movie 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman', and how she felt she couldn't play Sarah Jane again after 'The Five Doctors'.

"I really wanted to act. It was just what I wanted to do when I left school. I didn't go to stage school – I went to an ordinary grammar school, then drama school for two years, then to the local repertory theatre. We based ourselves in Manchester, although Brian (Miller, her husband) went into the West End with a production. We always knew we'd have to move to London, but it was so different. I didn't have the contacts. I didn't have an agent. In the end, I got one who had seen me in Manchester, and to my surprise, I got quite a bit of work.

"Someone else was offered Sarah Jane before me, but they decided to reconsider. I don't know if she recorded any – it was all a bit of a rush, which was to my advantage. I only found out afterwards. They tagged 'The Time Warrior' onto the end of the season when Jo Grant was leaving. I did that, then we finished and started again after Christmas. I remember going out and doing a lot of publicity shots. I got my hair cut very short and came back for the first production of the new season, the dinosaur one. Jon Pertwee hated my hair, just hated it, which was a wonderful welcome!

"I felt very strange that they weren't giving me more notes, that I wasn't being pressed into a mould more. I saw 'The Time Warrior' a long time after making it, and I was quite amazed at what a strong role they let me take. She was never so strong again. I remember Tom Baker later brought up a point: 'If the people the Doctor chooses to be with him are stupid, then it makes him out to be stupid'.

"The chemistry with Tom was the chemistry each actor bought to it. I saw Tom once in Regent Street and I couldn't cope with reality. 'Come and have a drink', he said. 'No, Doctor, I can't'. It worked very well and it was always a pleasure to work with Tom – it was just like shorthand. In the end, you just knew what we needed at a certain point. I helped with some of 'Doctor Who Meets Scratchman' (the proposed 70's film). The British Film Finance Corporation were very interested about that. I put in some ideas, but I didn't do any writing. They told me I'd been written in – but they might have written me out, too!

"I really didn't like the script for 'K9 and Company', but I loved the idea and I thought John Nathan-Turner was very brave to actually go for it. He wasn't given enough time to set it up, and I was concerned that there were things in it that weren't really Sarah. I would have loved to have made it really work, but I just think there were so many disadvantages when we started off.

"The Five Doctors was like a command performance. Everyone came back to it. The story had moments in it that really worked well, but I feel in the end it didn't kind of reach anything. I doubt very much that I could do another one – I don't really think I'm that person now, and I don't think you can play Sarah Jane so many years on. I'm different, and unless the script accommodated that, I don't think I could make it work."

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